GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:630
ANSWERED ON:28.02.2000
AMENDMENT IN TRAI ACT,1997
NAMDEO HARBAJI DIWATHE

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Arun Jaitely Committee appointed to look into amendments to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India(TRAI) Act, 1997 has submitted its Report to the Government;

(b) if so, the details of the recommendations made therein; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto? *****

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS

(SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR)
(a) to (c): Government had constituted on 13.12.99 a Group on Telecom and IT Convergence under the Chairmanship of Finance Minister. One of the terms of reference of this Group was to consider and make recommendations to strengthen the TRAI through suitable legislative amendments. This Group constituted a Sub-Group under the Chairmanship of Shri Arun Jaitley, Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting, to consider and make recommendations in this regard to the main Group. The report of the Sub-Group was considered by the Group on Telecom & IT Convergence, Based on which Government decided to bring about immediate amendments to the TRAI Act, 1997. Accordingly, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Ordinance, 2000 was promulgated on 24th January, 2000, bringing about certain structural changes in the TRAI Act 1997, with the objective of strengthening TRAI.
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Some of the salient amendments include the bringing about of a clear distinction between the recommendatory/ advisory functions of TRAI, and the regulatory functions to be discharged by it. While entrusting certain additional functions to TRAI, it has also been made mandatory for Government to seek recommendations of TRAI in respect of need and timing for introduction of new service providers, and the terms and conditions of licence to a service provider. Besides changing the composition of TRAI, the amendments made also provide for the setting up of a separate disputes redressal body, known as the `Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal`, with the objective of strengthening the disputes settlement mechanism.